

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OPR-02 A-01 SY-05 OC-06 CCO-00

ACDA-07 SAJ-01 SCCT-01 IO-13 OMB-01 AID-05 TRSE-00

SCS-03 SCA-01 DHA-02 SAM-01 NEAE-00 /100 W

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O P 121137Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1065

INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE PRIORITY 0012

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 6133

STUTTGART FOR ELG

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION JULY 12: PALESTINIAN SITUATION
INCREASINGLY GLOOMY

REF: BEIRUT 6105

1. SUMMARY: PALESTINIANS/LEFTTISTS NOW ON DEFENSIVE EVERYWHERE. THEY MAY SOON FIND THEIR BACKS TO SEA AT TRIPOLI, BEIRUT, AND SIDON, WITH TYRE AS ONLY REMAINING SOURCE OF SUPPLIES FROM ABROAD. CHRISTIANS ON SOUTHERN OUTSKIRTS OF TRIPOLI, AS SYRIANS PRESS ON CITY FROM NORTH. SYRIANS NOW BESEIGING BAALBEK. TELL ZAATAR APPEARS TO HAVE GIVEN UP THE GHOST. SIDON REFINERY CONTINUES TO BURN. LEBANESE PARTICIPATION AT ARAB LEAGUE CAIRO MEETING UNCLEAR. ARAFAT REPEATS DESPERATE APPEAL TO EGYPT FOR HELP. RAYMOND EDDE'S NEW "NATIONAL UNION FRONT" FORMALLY ESTABLISHED, AND HE HAD FRUITLESS MEETING WITH CAMILLE CHAMOUN IN CHRISTIAN

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SECTOR OF BEIRUT. EVENING OF JULY 11 SAW HOUR-LONG

CELEBRATIONS WITH SMALL ARMS FIRE IN BEIRUT IN RESPONSE TO VARIOUS GROUNDLESS RUMORS. END SUMMARY.

2. MILITARY SITUATION FEATURES PALESTINIAN/LEFTIST SETBACK ON THREE FRONTS -- AT BAALBEK; IN NORTH, NEAR TRIPOLI; AND AT TELL ZAATAR. PALESTINIANS MAY SOON FIND THEMSELVES ENCIRCLED WITH BACKS TO SEA AT TRIPOLI, BEIRUT AND SIDON. IN NORTH, ALMOST ENTIRE KOURA REGION NOW RETAKEN BY RIGHTISTS WHO REPORTEDLY NOW NEAR BAHAA'S ON OUTSKIRTS OF TRIPOLI. SYRIANS CONTINUE MOVE SOUTH AND CONTINUE BOMBARDMENT OF PALESTINIAN CAMP OF NAHR EL-BARED. ROAD EAST FROM TRIPOLI BLOCKED AT MILITANT CHRISTIAN TOWN OF ZGHORTA WHICH CONTINUES EXCHANGE HEAVY ARTILLERY FIRE WITH TRIPOLI. TRIPOLI MAY SOON BE ENCIRCLED.

3. IN THE BEKAA, THE SYRIANS HAVE MOVED AT LEAST PARTIALLY INTO LONG-BLOCKADED TOWN OF BAALBEK. SYRIAN BOMBARDMENT OF CITY, TO INCLUDE PALESTINIAN CAMP OF WAVELL, IS INCREASING IN INTENSITY. LEFTIST/PALESTINIAN COALITION CLAIMS WORLD FAMOUS ROMAN TEMPLE COMPLEX ALSO BEING HIT.

4. TELL ZAATAR CONTINUES MOVE SLOWLY UNDER CHRISTIAN CONTROL AND PROBABLY ONLY HANDFUL EXHAUSTED DEFENDERS REMAIN. CHRISTIANS CLAIM HAVE COMPLETELY OVERRUN LAST REMAINING PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE JULY 11, BUT PALESTINIAN RADIO JULY 12 CLAIMS CONTINUED RESISTANCE. SHELLING AT NEARBY SHIITE ENCLAVE OF NABAA CONTINUES. FIGHTING AND SHELLING CONTINUE ALONG TRADITIONAL BEIRUT CONFRONTATION LINE. GRAD MISSILES USED IN PORT AREA JULY 11 AND PROJECTILES FELL ON RESIDENTIAL AREAS BOTH EAST AND WEST OF GREEN LINE. IN THE CENTRAL MOUNTAINS LEVEL OF VIOLENCE REPORTED INCREASING IN TRADITIONALLY ACTIVE AREAS OF ALEY, KAHALE, BSOU, CHOUT, ARAYA, KOMATYE, BDEDOUN, HOUMAL, KEYFOUN, AYTATE AND SOUK EL GHARB.

5. IN SOUTH, SYRIANS HAVE SHELLED HILL VILLAGES NEAR SIDON. ZAHRANI TANK FARM FIRES STILL OUT OF CONTROL. CONFIDENTIAL

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WE HAVE REPORT SOME 58,000 BARRELS GENERATOR FUEL IN TWO TANKS NOT BURNING BUT ARE ENDANGERED.

6. WITH ARAB LEAGUE FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING SCHEDULED BEGIN WITHIN HOURS, LEBANESE PRESS SPEAKS OFF TOTAL CONFUSION ON POLITICAL FRONT. PRIMARY UNKNOWN IS WHETHER CHRISTIANS WILL SEND REPRESENTATIVE TO CAIRO FOLLOWING FAILURE TO RECEIVE

ADVANCE COPY OF AL TRIPARTITE COMMITTEE REPORT.
SYRIANS CONTINUE INSIST THEY ARE NOT MILITARILY
INVOLVED IN LEBANON AND SEEK ONLY TO END BLOODLETTING
HERE. ARAFAT APPEALS YET AGAIN TO SADAT, SAYING "THE
DEGENERATION OF THE LEBANESE SITUATION IS MUCH MORE
GRAVE THAN ONE WOULD IMAGINE" AND PALESTINIAN/LEFTIST
COALITION "AWAITS RAPID INITIATIVE BY EGYPT."
HOWEVER, ONE OF FEW SURE FACTORS IS SKEPTICISM WITH
WHICH ALL GROUPS REGARD ANY KIND OF ARAB "STRIKE FORCE."

7. RAYMOND EDDE CROSSED CITY CONFRONTATION LINE TO
MEET CAMILLE CHAMOUN IN ASHRAFIYYAH JULY 11 FOLLOWING
WHICH EDDE FOR ONCE NON-COMMITTAL. CHAMOUN HOWEVER
TOLD PRESS THAT, DESPITE RUMORS, HE DID NOT DISCUSS
POSSIBILITY OF POLITICAL ALLIANCE WITH EDDE. SOURCE
CLOSE TO EDDE SAYS HE ASKED CHAMOUN TO SUPPORT SYRIAN
WITHDRAWAL FROM LEBANON, BUT THAT LATTER REFUSED.
MEETING OCCURRED SAME DAY AS OFFICIAL FORMATION OF EDDE'S
"NATIONAL UNION FRONT" WITH THREE-POINT PROGRAM.
SIGNATORS OF FRONT CHARTER INCLUDE KARAME AND FORMER
PRIME MINISTERS SAEB SALAM, AHMED DAOUK AND RACHID
SOLH; FORMER MINISTERS RAYMOND EDDE, AMINE BEYHUN,
HASSAN RAFTI, JAMIL KEBBE AND ALI KHALIL AND DEPUTIES
MICHAEL DAHER, ALBERT MANSOUR, ABDEL MAGID RAFTI AND
NAJIB KAROUNOUH. ABDALLAH YAFI SAID TO BE IN ACCORD
WITH FRONT'S OBJECTIVES BUT DID NOT SIGN CHARTER.
ONE REPORT HAS IT THAT BOTH EDDE AND SALAM WANT TO BE
SECRETARY GENERAL OF NEW ORGANIZATION.

8. DEAFENING SALVOS OF SMALL AND MEDIUM ARMS
FIRE BROKE OUT IN BEIRUT LATE JULY 11, HEIGHTENING
CONFUSION. EAST BEIRUTIS SAID CELEBRATING ANNOUNCED
FINAL FALL OF TELL ZAATAR. WEST BEIRUTIS CELEBRATED
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(FALSE) NEWS FROM VOICE OF PALESTINE RADIO THAT SYRIAN
PRESIDENT ASSAD HAD BEEN ASSASSINATED. SALVOS FIRED
IN AIR FOR ALMOST AN HOUR BEFORE RADIO BEIRUT
(LEBANESE ARAB ARMY) THREW WET BLANKET ON WESTERN
SECTOR WITH STATEMENT THAT "EVERY WASTED ARAB BULLET
IS A CRIME AGAINST THE GRAND CAUSE AND BETRAYAL OF
MARTYRS TO THAT CAUSE." RADIO DAMASCUS LATER CLARIFIED
SITUATION SAYING ONLY PERSON ASSASSINATED IN DAMASCUS
WAS IRAQI POLITICAL REFUGEE AHMED AZZAOU, WHOSE DEATH
STARTED THE RUMOR. SOME WEST BEIRUT DRUZES CELEBRATED
(FALSE) RUMOR THAT PRESIDENT FRANGIE HAD RESIGNED.
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